

**DRAFT DECISION RECORD  
and  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
for  
MAINTAINING VIABLE POPULATIONS OF WILD HORSES  
in  
HERD MANAGEMENT AREAS  
within the  
RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE MANAGEMENT AREA**

**SUMMARY**

The Great Divide Resource Management Plan (RMP), as amended, identifies three wild horse herd management areas (HMA) within which wild, free-roaming horses will be managed in a humane, safe, efficient, and environmentally sound manner. RMP objectives will be followed and management actions will be carried out to maintain a thriving, natural, ecological balance and to preserve the multiple-use relationship that exists in the areas occupied by wild horses. Management is needed to maintain the health of public rangelands the wild horses and other animals rely on for their existence and to maintain wild horse populations at levels that prevent unwanted damage to state and privately owned land.

**DRAFT DECISION LANGUAGE**

I have reviewed the analysis of alternatives for wild horse management within the Rawlins Field Office (RFO) management area as presented in the environmental assessment for *Maintaining Viable Populations of Wild Horses in Herd Management Areas within the Rawlins Field Office Management Area (EA)*. Based on the analysis, my decision is to select Alternative 1. The specific elements of my decision are as follows:

1. The Rawlins Field Office Wild Horse Management Handbook (handbook) will guide wild horse management in the RFO. The handbook will contain all current policy, practices, procedures, and technical support documentation which affect wild horse management. The handbook will be available for review during normal business hours at the Rawlins Field Office, 1300 N 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Rawlins, Wyoming. The handbook will provide continuing guidance to individuals involved in wild horse management and provide the public with the opportunity to understand individual wild horse program actions within the larger program context.
2. The Great Divide RMP will continue to provide the general wild horse program direction within the RFO management area.
3. Management will be based on the current configuration of HMAs and the AMLs that have been determined for those areas as identified in the Great Divide RMP.
4. The following principles will be employed as the primary model for wild horse management decisions. The principles include:
  - a. Maintenance of populations within the ranges identified for the AML.

- b. Regular monitoring and evaluation of herd and habitat health.
- c. Humane care and treatment of animals.
- d. Periodic review and revision of HMAPs.
- e. Timely response to emergency situations.
- f. Timely response to requests to remove strayed horses from private lands.

5. Herd Management Area Plans for the three HMAs will be periodically updated to maintain consistency with current manual standards, policy, and program direction. HMAPs will provide guidance for all site-specific wild horse management activities.

6. A primary tool for the achievement of the RMP objective will be regular, recurrent population management actions (PMA). The types of actions will include, but will not be limited to, capture and removal, relocation, and capture treat and release. Removal actions will be designed to maintain the established AMLs within the designated HMAs.

7. Specific removal actions will take place within established wild horse program policies and procedures. This will include appropriate public notice and review and the prescribed opportunities for public input.

8. Fertility control research proposals will be considered and evaluated on a case by case basis. Fertility control, if selected for operational use in an individual HMA, will be carefully monitored to insure that the effects on individual wild horses or herd behavior are understood and considered.

9. The Selective Removal policy will continue to be employed. Current adoption demand will continue to be the primary consideration in the specific criteria that will be employed in any specific removal action.

10. Helicopters will be used in conjunction with wranglers on horseback to effect capture actions. Relocations would be accomplished with either helicopters or wranglers on horseback. Feed trapping and water trapping will not be employed except in emergency conditions where specific actions can be completed without causing undue stress to wild horses or other animals occupying the area.

11. Except for emergency conditions and landowner requests, no removals will be conducted during the period beginning on or about April 1 and concluding on or about July 4 of each calendar year.

#### **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Based on the environmental analysis presented in the environmental assessment for *Maintaining Viable Populations of Wild Horses in Herd Management Areas within the Rawlins Field Office Management Area*, I find that the impacts to the quality of the human environment are not expected to be significant. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary.

I have reviewed my responsibilities under existing laws, regulations, policies, and land use decisions, and my decision is consistent with them.

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Kurt Kotter  
Rawlins Field Office Manager

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Date